

1998. Under his exemplary leadership, the City boasted a record low tax rate and had a \$9 million surplus. In addition to fulfilling his civic duties, Mr. Gereffi devoted his efforts towards charitable works as well. Among his proudest accomplishments was helping to open the Alzheimer's Day Care Center in Lauderdale Lakes.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand before you today in memory of a model citizen from South Florida. Mr. Gereffi devoted his energies to his family, friends, constituents and community at large. His greatest joy was in helping his fellow man and improving the quality of life for all in his city. He is survived by his daughters, a brother, four grandchildren, four great grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO OTHELL BALLAGE

#### HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 17, 2003*

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with solemn heart that I rise before you today to pay tribute to the memory of a remarkable citizen from my district. Othell Ballage of Pueblo, Colorado was a leader in his community and a friend to many. Sadly, he recently passed away at the age of 74. As his family and friends mourn his passing, I would like to remember Othell for his kind heart and generous spirit.

Othell was transferred to Pueblo by the U.S. Army and stationed at the Chemical Depot over thirty years ago. Having seen much of the world during his time in the Army, Othell decided Pueblo would be a good place to call home upon retiring from the service in 1975. It was then that Othell chose to realign his sights from national service to a more regional focus. After his days in the Army, accomplishing what would be considered a lifetime of achievements for most, Othell began to leave his mark on Pueblo. For the next twenty years, Othell pursued his goals in both higher education and public service. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from the University of Maryland in 1982 and went on to earn a Master's degree in management from Pacific Western University in 1996. Othell also worked as a counselor for the Colorado Job Training Program and served on numerous boards, including those of the NAACP and the Pueblo Human Rights Commission, as well as the Governor's Task Force on Drunk Driving.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Pueblo and its citizens have lost a truly outstanding citizen and friend. Even more impressive than his numerous contributions to the community was Othell's role as a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Othell was a remarkable citizen and he will certainly be missed. I am honored to pay tribute to his life here today.

#### HONORING OF UHHS BEDFORD MEDICAL CENTER

#### HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 17, 2003*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of UHHS Bedford Medical Center on the occasion of its 75th anniversary of service to the community. Originally no more than four beds on the second floor of a private home in Bedford, the hospital has grown through the years to keep pace with an expanding population and the demand for high quality accessible medical care.

UHHS Bedford Medical Center originally opened as the Bedford Municipal Hospital on November 29, 1928. The community strongly supported this hospital through passing 5 levies between 1943 and 1952. By 1956, the hospital was known as Bedford Community Hospital and boasted many new and modern departments and amenities. In 1962, the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations accredited the hospital for the first time. The hospital continued to grow, adding a new wing and surgical facilities. In 1979, the name was changed to The Community Hospital of Bedford. It continued to expand and, by 1984, the hospital achieved its current capacity of 110 beds.

On November 30, 1993, the University Hospital Health System purchased the hospital, ushering in an era of rapid growth and innovation, adding a state of the art Outpatient Surgery Center and the Bretschneider Women's Unit offering enhanced obstetrics and gynecological services. Bedford Medical Center is continuing to grow: in 2001, adjoining land was purchased to augment Bedford Medical Center's current facilities.

Bedford Medical Center represents a model of collaboration and success evidenced by the relationships established between the Board of Trustees, the physicians and staff. Growth has been a key word in the hospital's history. A key to the hospital's growth is an unparalleled staff that focuses on keeping patients and the staff satisfied, well cared for, healthy and happy.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Bedford Medical Center on its Diamond Anniversary of serving over 260,000 residents in Southeast Cuyahoga and Northern Portage and Summit Counties. In tribute to the hospital's rich tradition of commitment to the community, let us celebrate these last 75 years with motto—Generations of Caring. I hope that the Bedford Medical Center will continue to serve and care for its community for at least another 75 years.

#### A TRIBUTE TO TOM MOHR—SAN MATEO UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

#### HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 17, 2003*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to a dedicated and distinguished public servant, San Mateo Union High School District Super-

intendent Tom Mohr, who recently announced his retirement. During a remarkable 43-year career in public education as a teacher, counselor, principal, district level administrator, and Superintendent in my district, Mr. Mohr has demonstrated a continuous and unwavering commitment to providing the best education possible for San Mateo County's youth.

After an exceptional career in the Jefferson School District in Daly City, he joined the San Mateo Union High School District in 1985 as an Assistant Superintendent, and was promoted to Superintendent in 1996. During a time of tremendous challenges in the field of education, Superintendent Mohr has never failed in his determination to provide a superior education for our students, while building first class institutions, and supporting a first-class professional staff.

The San Mateo Union High School District serves 8,300 students from six communities in my congressional district. It maintains seven high schools—Aragon, Burlingame, Capuchino, Hillsdale, Mills, Peninsula, and San Mateo. Five of the district schools have been recognized as National Blue Ribbon, or California Distinguished Schools.

Superintendent Mohr has been a strong leader in the district. His excellent communication skills have kept the community, staff, and students informed and involved, and have effectively reduced tensions between groups. His boundless energy has enabled him to excel in the many roles and demands placed on the Superintendency. Recently, under Mr. Mohr's outstanding leadership, the community passed a \$137.5 million bond issue to modernize six of the district's schools.

His erudition and experience have led to his appointment to numerous community and professional task forces and advisory boards, which include the U.S. Naval Academy undergraduate selection committee, plus nearly 30 different school accreditation teams, the majority of which he has chaired. He has worked tirelessly to establish high academic standards, encouraging all students from diverse backgrounds to pursue excellence in all of their endeavors. He initiated an exemplary safety program for the students that was endorsed by law enforcement agencies, and built strong school-community partnerships that serve the needs of citizens of all ages.

Superintendent Mohr was honored in 1999 by the Mid-Peninsula Boys & Girls Club as its Citizen of the Year. In 2001 he was named Superintendent of the Year by the San Francisco and San Mateo County region of the Association of California School Administrators, and he is the City of San Mateo's Citizen of the Year for 2003. Upon his retirement in January 2004, Mr. Mohr plans to spend more time with his grandchildren and possibly to pursue advanced university studies. Such is his personal commitment to the value of education.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Mohr's presence will be greatly missed in the boardroom and classrooms of the San Mateo Union High School District. His courage, intellect, integrity, and level of professionalism testify to the endless capabilities of this man and to the impact he will surely leave on the district. His legacy lives in the standards of excellence he has modeled for those who follow and in his unwavering commitment to the district's goals and programs. Mr. Mohr's efforts to better the education of San Mateo County's youth will serve as an inspiration to all of us. I urge my